

Greetings by governor Ryotaro Azuma, member of the International Olympic Committee

Mr. President and Fellow Members of the International Olympic Committee !

On this auspicious occasion of the Solemn Opening of the 62nd session of the I.O.C., with the gracious presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, it is indeed a high honour and rare privilege for me, in my capacity as Governor of the host city for the Games of the XVIIIth Olympiad, to extend my heartiest welcome to you on behalf of 11 million people of Tokyo Metropolis.

Once in 1958, I was favoured with a similar honour to welcome the 54th session of I.O.C. here in Tokyo as president of the Japanese Olympic Committee. And I recollect the following words in my greetings which I quote :

« We are and we remain forever an ardent upholder of the Olympic Games as we have been in the past. We firmly believe that in this world of suspicion and jealousy, nothing could be more essential for the peace and security of mankind than the faith, fair play and good sportsmanship embodied in the Olympic Ideal. And I hope sincerely that the Torch of Olympism may continue to burn ever brighter on all of the five Continents. »

Mr. President ! At last, the day has come to keep the long-coveted Olympic Flame burning in Asia. The Flame lit at Olympia travelled 16,200 km. by air to Kagoshima stopping over at 12 cities in 12 countries on the way. After arriving in Japan, the Flame was divided into 4 torches to be relayed along 4 different routes through all 46 prefectures covering 6,754 km. divided into 4,190 sections escorted by 96,370

persons in all. And, on the eve of the Opening of the Games, these 4 torches will join together in one and a single Flame in front of the Imperial Palace to be ready for the final stretch to the National Stadium for the august moment of the climax of the Opening Ceremony on October 10th.

Our fervent desire cherished so dearly and so long has now been fulfilled. We shall soon see the Olympic Flame burning ever brighter and higher in Tokyo in this memorable year of the 70th Anniversary of the International Olympic Committee. We are extremely happy to be able to meet the responsibility which once in the past we had to give up reluctantly under a deplorable circumstance. However, the great honour and heavy responsibility to be the host city for the Grand Sport Festival for the Youth of the World have made us exert the utmost in our mind and body to prepare for the success of the Games. I am quite confident that the Olympic Games have offered Tokyo the unique chance to begin a gallant march along the programme of civic improvements of the Municipality.

Mr. President ! I sincerely wish to meet your expectations and to serve to contribute for the success of the session under your leadership.

Last but not in the least, it is a pleasant duty to express my deep appreciation to Your Majesties, Highnesses, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen for honouring the Solemn Opening of the 62nd session of I.O.C. to-day with your presence.